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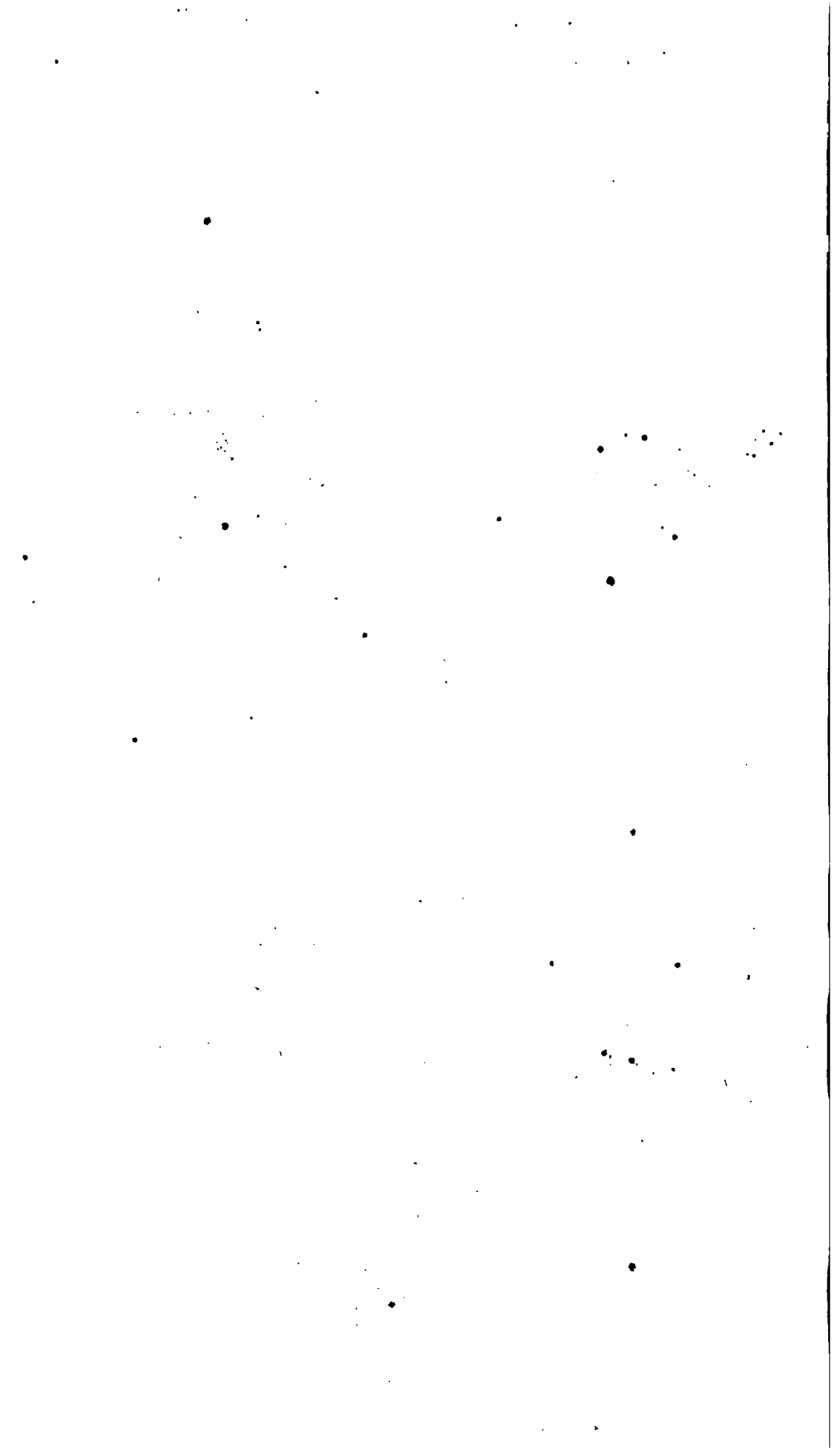
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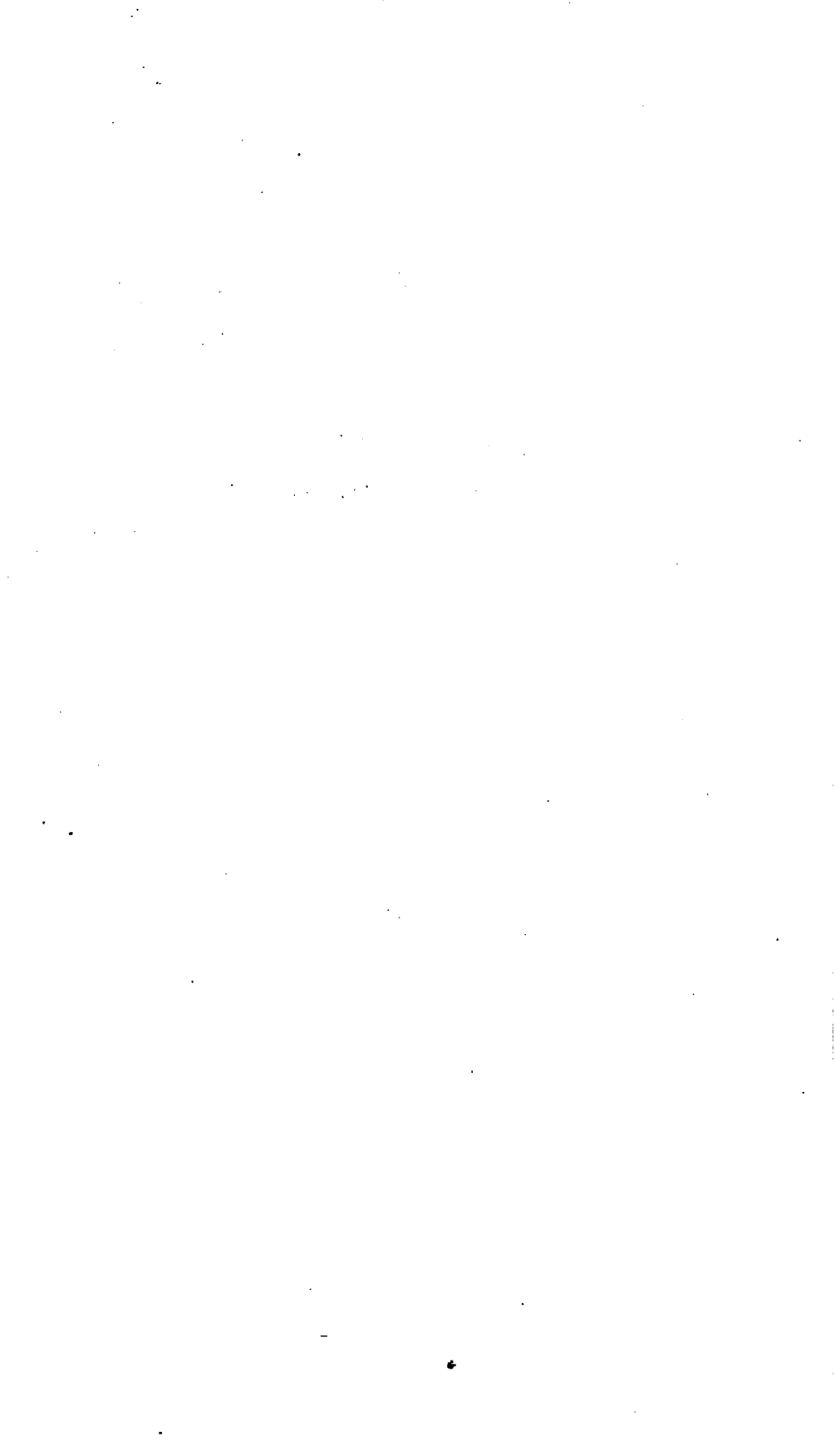


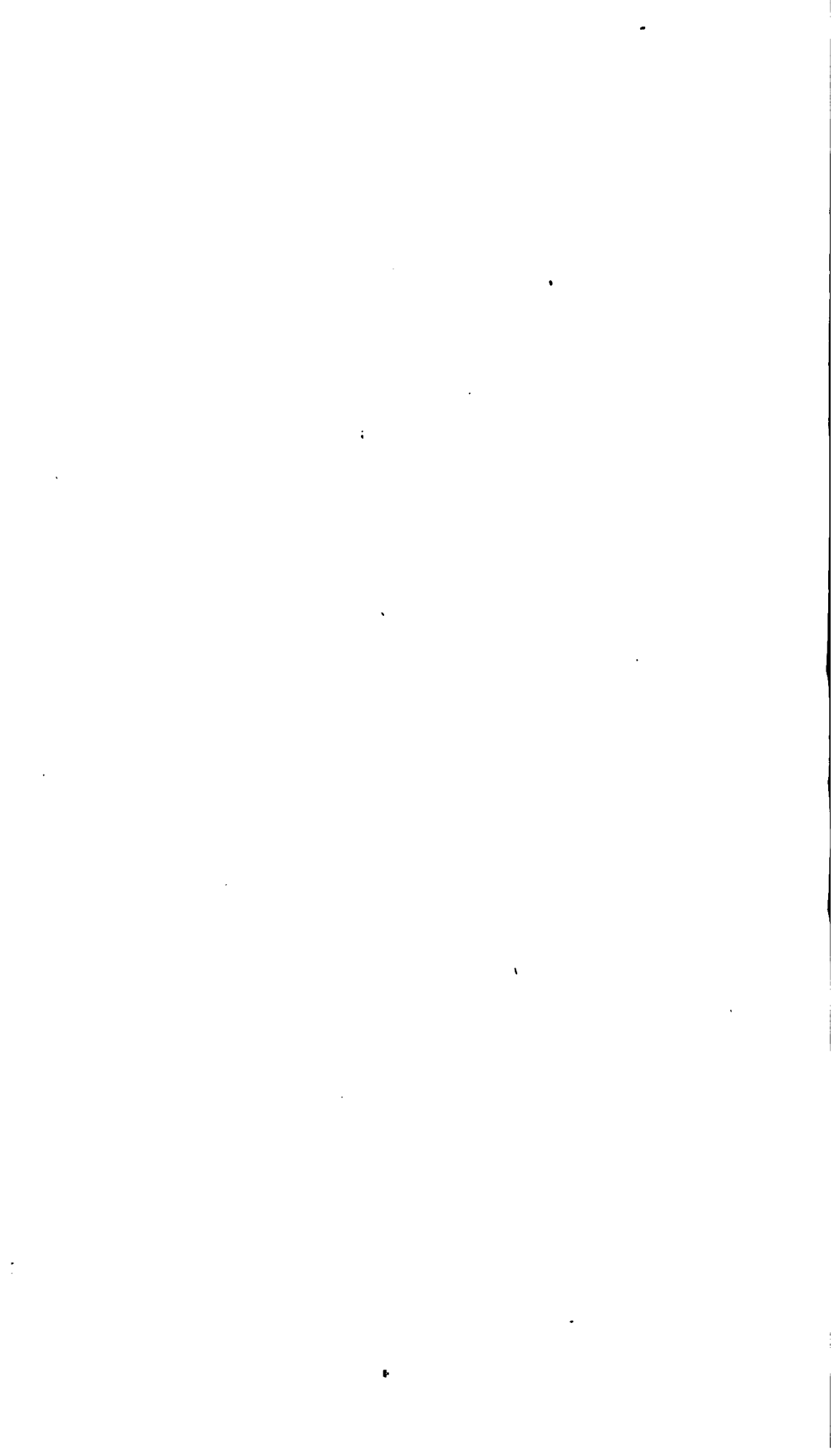
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MR. WILSON'S

FUNERAL SERMON.







Ad. Wilson from the church

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SERMON

PREACHED IN THE

BENEFICENT CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH, PROVIDENCE,

SEPTEMBER 29, 1839.

OCCASIONED BY THE DEATH

OF

REV. JAMES WILSON, A. M.

LATE SENIOR PASTOR OF SAID CHURCH.

By MARK TUCKER,
SURVIVING PASTOR.

PROVIDENCE:
PRINTED BY B. T. ALBRO.
1839.

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PROVIDENCE, October 9, 1839.

Rev'd & Dear Sir:

At a meeting of the Beneficent Congregational Society on Monday evening, 7th instant, the undersigned were appointed a Committee to request of you for publication, a copy of the discourse delivered on Sunday afternoon, 29th ult., with reference to the Death of their late Senior Pastor, Rev'd James Wilson.

In compliance with the above, we respectfully request, that you will furnish us with a copy of said discourse, to be published agreeable to the wishes of the Society.

In behalf of whom,

We are, dear Sir,

Your ob't. servants,

ELISHA DYER,
WARREN S. GREENE,
BENJAMIN DYER.

To Rev. MARK TUCKER, D. D.
Pastor Benf't Cong'l Society.

PROVIDENCE, Oct. 11, 1839.

Gentlemen:

In compliance with the request of the Society, expressed in their vote of the 7th inst. I herewith transmit a copy of my sermon preached on the occasion of the death of the late venerable senior pastor of the Beneficent Congregational Church. If it shall tend to preserve the memory of one so generally revered and loved by this community, I shall rejoice.

With high consideration,

Yours in the Gospel of Christ,

M. TUCKER.

ELISHA DYER, Esq.
Dea. WARREN S. GREENE,
BENJAMIN DYER, Esq.

S E R M O N .

HEB. IX. 28—*And unto them that look for him shall he appear a second time without sin unto salvation.*

I STAND not here, surrounded as I am by these sombre and solemn badges, and by this afflicted congregation, to eulogize the dead; but to improve the holy providence that has laid the aged senior Pastor of this people low. I approach the duty now expected of me with trembling, for I well know I cannot meet your expectations, nor reach the interest of the subject. A beloved pastor, an able minister, a valued friend has been removed, and this people are here, to-day, to mingle their tears, and to improve this sudden providence. Let me say few congregations have had *such* a pastor to lose, one who had lived so long and labored so faithfully, and few therefore will be called to so solemn an account for the enjoyment of high religious privileges.

We have selected this text on this mournful occasion, as descriptive of his character and hopes.—*And*

unto them that look for him shall he appear the second time without sin unto salvation.

Where is the promise of his coming? for since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation. This says the apostle Peter is the language of those who are walking after their own lusts. Alarmed perhaps for a moment at the vivid descriptions of the gospel, pausing at the sound of divine threatening, they have feared the wrath of God, and been led to ask with some solicitude, "what must we do to be saved?" But influenced by passion, drawn away by temptation, fascinated by the world, entrapped by the great adversary, they have returned to their former courses, and given seriousness to the winds. Divine judgments did not overtake them—Jesus Christ did not appear to their confusion—death did not summons them to the judgment seat—therefore they cast off fear, and prompted by a spirit of presumption and unbelief, they enquire *where is the promise of his coming?* They see no tokens of his approach, *all things continue as they were from the beginning.* Neither did the people of Sodom discover any signs of approaching ruin on the morning of the day of their destruction; nor the inhabitants of the old world during the period that Noah was building the ark. Still judgment lingered not: nor will it ever linger, for he that is to come *will come, and will not tarry.* *But unto them that look for him shall he appear the second time without sin unto salvation.*

The text expresses,

I. *The certainty and manner of Christ's second coming.*

II. *The characters happily interested in that event.*

III. *The end of his appearance.*

1st. *The certainty and manner of Christ's second coming.*—The coming of Christ is a topic on which the apostles dilated with more than mortal eloquence, that suffering christians might be braced to a patient endurance of their trials, and encouraged to a steady perseverance in their duties. What subject of more commanding interest or of greater efficacy could be presented to confirm their wavering faith, to revive their weary hope or to invigorate their drooping zeal? And what theme more suitable and soothing, can be presented, on this occasion, to alleviate the bitterness of sorrow, to sustain the mind under the pressure of grief and the magnitude of your loss, than the day of revelation, the complete redemption of Christ's mystical body, when pastor and people will rise *to join the general assembly and Church of the first born.*

The *second* appearance of Christ is a fundamental article of the christian faith—the chief testimony against the adversaries of the truth—it is an event on which the eyes of the church should be intensely fixed, especially when passing under the cloud of affliction.

The *certainty* of Christ's second coming is established by abundant and infallible evidence. Infidelity is the offspring of sin. It springs not from the want of evidence, but from want of holiness—from a corrupt nature. We doubt what we dread. Those who live in impiety and unbelief, rather than renounce their sins, cut off a right hand and pluck out a right eye, will make shipwreck of their faith and run the

hazard of stumbling upon those dark mountains which lie in the region and shadow of death.

Even reason, judging from the power of conscience, the disorders in society, the economy of providence and the character of God might anticipate this great event. But these lively oracles are the only source of evidence upon which we can rely with safety. And on a subject of such moment conviction cannot be too strong, nor impressions too deep.

The *first* advent of Christ was announced immediately after the fall—it was shadowed forth in the types and embodied in the observances of the Jewish dispensation. The church waited for it—a general expectation pervaded the world. The unbelief and scorn of the wicked did not retard or prevent it. They enquired, *where is the promise of his coming?* They might have seen the evidence in the smoke of a thousand altars—in the rites of a whole people selected and preserved a distinct nation to keep alive the expectations and to perpetuate the memorial—they might have seen the evidence in the fall of empires—in the political changes of the world—in the gradual absorption of all nations in imperial Rome. And in the fullness of time, designated by prophecy, God sent forth his Son, to redeem them that were under the law.

The *second* advent of Christ was announced at his ascension. It is incorporated with the institutions of the gospel—the hopes of the church are founded on it. Divine truth is staked—the glory of God is identified with it. Still men ask where is the promise of his coming? Does not the sun shine as brightly and

the affairs of men roll on as uninterruptedly as at the beginning? They might see the evidence in the extension of his kingdom—in the multiform charities and benevolent enterprises of the church—in the aspect of the world and the signs of the times. Yes, at the looked-for period, shall appear He who went up to heaven from the top of Olivet. As certainly as He who was predicted by the prophets came in the flesh, so certainly shall He who ascended to the right hand of the Father, *come a second time without sin unto salvation.*

We can only advert to the ground of this assurance in the briefest manner. The Patriarchs believed it. The Evangelists and Apostles predicted it. And Christ himself spake of it in the most unequivocal language.

Enoch, the seventh from Adam, prophesied saying, *Behold the Lord cometh with ten thousand of his saints, to execute judgement upon all.* In many parts of the old Testament, where temporal judgments are threatened, the expressions are so varied and forcible, the images so striking and bold, the circumstances so interesting and awful, that they evidently refer to events more distant and grand. The scene of his coming was presented distinctly before Daniel, *I beheld till the thrones were cast down. And the ancient of days did sit whose garment was white as snow. And the hair of his head like pure wool; his throne was like fiery flames, and his wheels as burning fire. Thousand thousands ministered unto him, and ten thousand times ten thousand stood before him; the judgment was set, and the books were opened.* Jesus Christ by whose spirit the prophet was eleva-

ted to the majesty of the subject has explained and sanctioned the representation. *Hereafter ye shall see the Son of man sitting on the right hand of power and coming in the clouds of heaven.* In the 25 Chapter of Matthew he gives a full and detailed account of the tremendous scene, "When the Son of man shall come in his glory and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory, and before him shall be gathered all nations: and he shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats." The same truth is repeated in the Revelations, "Behold I come quickly, and my reward is with me, to give unto every man according as his work shall be. This same Jesus," said the two angels to the apostles who witnessed his ascension, "shall come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven." A cloud received him out of their sight, and he will come with clouds.

Nothing can be more certain than the second advent of the Messiah. The whole Church is interested in this event. He will come again to receive them to himself.

"At the destined period shall return

"He, once on earth, who bled for human guilt,

"And with Him, all our triumph o'er the tomb."

More will wait for him then, than was found waiting at the time of his incarnation. *Then* he came to his own, but they received him not: *now*, he will be glorified in his saints, and admired in all them that believe. The language of the church is, "Even so, come Lord Jesus, come quickly."

The precise period is not mentioned. It is concealed from the angels. When the purposes of grace are com-

~~from the angels. When the purposes of grace are com-~~
 pleted, the mystery of God is finished, the prophecies are fulfilled, and the mediatorial kingdom sufficiently enlarged, the Son of man will come and *deliver up the kingdom to God even the Father. But the day of the Lord will come unexpectedly as a thief in the night, so that when men shall say peace and safety, while they are abusing the mercies of God, and perverting the gifts of his providence, while neglecting their souls, then sudden destruction cometh upon them—and they shall not escape.*

The *manner* of his appearance is also expressly mentioned in the text, viz.—*without sin*. The meaning is, when Christ again appears, he will not make himself a sin-offering: by dying once he has perfectly accomplished the redemption of those who trust in him.

“The return of Christ from heaven to the earth at the last day,” says McKnight, “is here compared to, and was typified by, the return of the high priest from the inward tabernacle. For after appearing in the presence of God, and making atonement for the people in the plain dress of an ordinary priest, he came out arrayed in his magnificent robes, to bless the people who waited for him in the court of the tabernacle of the congregation.”

The apostle evidently designed to contrast the first and second coming of the Son of man. He appeared first in a low condition: he will next appear in a glorious state. The *manner* of his appearing corresponds with the *end*. He came first to be a Mediator between God and man: to propitiate incensed justice; to restore us by humility who fell by pride; to illustrate his love to us, and to recommend by the efficacy of his example, the meek endurance of the ills

of life; therefore he was *in the likeness of sinful flesh*. His second coming will be to perform the last act of his regal office, to determine the eternal states of angels and men; therefore he will come in the glory of the Godhead. He appeared first as a servant, now as a king. His period of humiliation was his residence upon the earth; he now comes in state, his retinue the angels, his throne the clouds. In the days of his flesh he emptied himself, took the form of a servant, and being found in the fashion of a man, he humbled himself and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross, *wherefore God also hath highly exalted him*; and now his exaltation is evident to all; his obedience and sufferings are the titles to his triumph. He has a name that is above every name; at the mention of which every knee bows, of those in heaven and those in earth; and every tongue acknowledges his supremacy.

He came at first to save his people from their sins by the sacrifice of himself, therefore he is called the lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world—and is said to have been bruised for our iniquities and smitten of God for us. He was a man of sorrows—an outcast, not having where to lay his head. He was despised and rejected of men—he was reviled, persecuted, arraigned, condemned and crucified. But now, behold, at the sound of the trump of God he comes—"He comes indeed! but how changed. How different his appearance from what it was. How shall we be able to conceive of it as it deserves, or raise our thoughts from his weakness in the manger to his greatness on the throne of judgment. Behold he who came in swaddling clothes now cometh with

clouds. He who came to preach the day of salvation, cometh again to proclaim the day of vengeance. He, who was led as a lamb to the slaughter, leads his ten thousands to the prey as the lion of the tribe of Judah.—He who cried not, nor lifted up his voice against his enemies upon earth, thunders with the glorious voice of his excellency against them from heaven. He who never brake a bruised reed, rules the nations with a rod of iron, and breaks them in pieces like a potter's vessel. He who quenched not the smoking flax, extinguishes the great lights of the world; darkens the sun and turns the moon into blood; commands the stars from their stations, and the dead from their graves; shakes the powers of heaven—the foundations of the earth, and all hearts that are not fixed on him.”* He will dissolve the old world and raise the new.

His personal excellence and glory will be above description. His beauty and brightness before concealed, will now shine forth. His enemies confounded at the splendor, will seek in vain to hide from him that sitteth on the throne; while his friends filled with admiration will rejoice at his approach. He will now appear to a gathering world the effulgence of his Father's glory, the express image of his person.

———“Oh! how unlike

“The babe of Bethlehem! how unlike the man

“That groan'd on calvary! Yet he it is,—

“That man of sorrow! Oh! how chang'd!”

He will break through the heavens,

“In all the splendor of the Deity!

*Bp. Horne.

"Darken the sun, confound the brightest star,
"His Father's image perfectly express'd!"
"The nations then shall own him for their God,
"And the whole world confess th' Almighty Judge."

His appearance is thus described by one who beheld in vision the King of glory returning through the everlasting gates. "I saw heaven opened, and behold a white horse and he that sat upon him was called faithful and true," the accomplisher of all his promises, "and in righteousness he doth judge the world, and make war" against all that oppose him. "His eyes were as a flame of fire," searching all hearts, discerning and destroying the counsels of his adversaries. "And on his head were many crowns," all the kingdoms of this world were become his: "and he had a name written" that no one knew but himself, the ineffible name of the divine essence. "And he was clothed in a vesture dipped in blood," once the symbol of salvation, but now the garment of vengeance. "And his name, by which he is known to men, is called the word of God." "And the armies which are in heaven followed him upon white horses," attending him in his glory, "clothed in fine linen white and clean," which is the righteousness of the saints. "And out of his mouth went a sharp two edged sword," that with it he should smite the nations. "And he shall rule them" that have rejected the golden sceptre of mercy, "with a rod of iron." "And he had on his vesture, and on his thigh a name written King of kings and Lord of Lords."

In his presence the sun will go out and human greatness dwindle into nothing. How will the kings of the earth, and the great men, and the rich men, and the mighty men be astonished, and call upon the rocks to hide

them: while they who pierced him by their ingratitude and unbelief and neglected his salvation, *shall wail because of him.*

But there will be others waiting for his appearance who will be desirous to see him; *FOR UNTO THEM THAT LOOK FOR HIM shall he appear the second time without sin unto salvation.* Which leads us to notice—

II. *The characters happily interested in that event.*

The description is short, but full of meaning. They are said *to look* or *wait for him.* This implies an acquaintance with his person. By the world he is neglected. They are ignorant of his character, his offices and his work. They see nothing in him that they should desire him. They look at his external appearance merely, while his disciples behold the rays of his glory that shine through the vail of his flesh. To *them* he has been exhibited in the light of a Saviour. Convinced by the Spirit of truth of their entire depravity, finding no good thing in them by nature, feeling the plague of their own hearts, loathing themselves as vile in the eyes of God, they have sought deliverance from the guilt and pollution of sin.—Enlightened from above they have been enabled to look to calvary. Beholding the lamb of God that taketh away the sins of the world, they have obtained forgiveness through his blood. Sensible of their ignorance Jesus Christ is made unto them wisdom—bound down under a sense of guilt, he has become their righteousness—groaning in spirit on account of the remains of in-dwelling sin, he is now their sanctification—sighing for deliverance from bondage he is their redemption. He is now all their salvation and all their desire.

Seeing more and more of their own unworthiness ; having continual discoveries of the deceitfulness and desperate wickedness of their own hearts, they are led to look habitually to Jesus the author and finisher of their faith ; they count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus their Lord. And the more they see of the fullness of his salvation, and the perfection of his righteousness, the more do they desire to be found in him, "not having on their own righteousness which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness of God by faith." They dwell with delight upon the interesting events of his life ; and esteem every fragment precious that gives them a more enlarged acquaintance with his amiable character. His meekness, humility, forgiveness, self-denial, and spotless holiness become their pattern and study. Knowing that while here in the body they are absent from the Lord, and having only partial glimpses of his glory, they looked for him with ardent love—with earnest longing—with due preparation.

1. They look for him *with ardent love*. They can never forget what he has done for them. His humiliation, sufferings and death, powerfully affect their hearts and excite their gratitude ; while the excellencies of his character, the beauties of his person, the perfection of his work, the fitness of his salvation, together with the light they enjoy, the peace they receive, the hope they indulge, bind their hearts with the sincerest attachment. The great subject of their lamentation is, the coldness of their affections and the

deadness of their feelings. They are sensible that he is the chief among ten thousands—the one altogether lovely. All the excellency of character that ever shone in the life of the children of men is but a faint image of his own. Whatever is great in power, commanding in influence, lovely in virtue, dignified in integrity, noble in forgiveness, sublime in suffering, or disinterested in love is united in him. They cannot exalt him too much. Purchased by his blood, sanctified by his spirit, drawn by the cords of his love, they desire to live entirely to him who gave himself for their redemption. He has all their confidence; his bosom alone becomes the depository of their heaviest afflictions, their deepest sorrows. Their best friend is absent, and while in the body they must have tribulation, they wait for union and fellowship with him with something of the apostle's desire of departure.

2. They look for him *with earnest longing of spirit*.—They are not satisfied with present attainments. The views they have had of his glory lessen the value of the world, shew them the sin of living entirely to themselves, and increase their desires for more light, more strength, more joy. The fountain at which they drink is never dry—the path they have entered upon never comes to a close. Sanctified but in part, they struggle and pray for deliverance from the body of death, for conformity to the image of Christ. The success that has crowned their exertions, they regard as a pledge of greater victories. Having tasted that God is gracious, experienced some of the privileges of adoption, they cannot remain at ease in the tents of Midian, nor linger in the valley of Baca. They have

received a few clusters of the grapes of Eschol—these only make this wilderness appear more barren, and increase their appetites for the fruit of the promised land. They sometimes reach the summit of Pisgah, the prospects that rise before them make the world appear more dreary and dark, and fill them with holy fervor to pass the Jordan of death under the guidance of the Captain of their salvation. If the joys they taste here are so refreshing, the peace they experience is so desirable, what must it be to be admitted into the presence of God where is fullness of joy and at his right hand where are pleasures forever more. Short of this therefore they cannot be contented. To be like Christ and see him as he is, is the substance of their prayers and the end of their hopes.

3. They look for him *with due preparation*—in the discharge of active duty. *But ye brethren are not in darkness*, says Paul, *that that day should overtake you as a thief. Ye are all the children of light and the children of the day. Therefore let us not sleep as do others; but let us watch and be sober.* Knowing that life is uncertain, that the day of the Lord is at hand, they keep their lamps trimmed and burning, and are like those servants who wait for the coming of their Lord.—They desire to meet him in every duty, to find him in every ordinance, to behold him in every dispensation. Ignorant of the day and the hour in which he will come, they desire to have their hearts sanctified, their lives renewed—their work done, that they may render up their account with joy and not with grief. They endeavor to keep their evidences clear, their graces in exercise against the suddenness of the call. Keeping

their garments unspotted from the world, they lay aside every weight and the sin that easily besets them; and are continually pressing towards the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.

III. The third subject mentioned in the text is,—

THE END OF HIS APPEARANCE. *And unto them that look for him shall he appear the second time without sin* UNTO SALVATION. *He shall come, says Paul, to be glorified in his saints, and to be admired in all them that believe. If I go and prepare a place for you, says the blessed Saviour, I will come again and receive you unto myself.* Those, for whom, during the intermediate space between his ascension and second coming he has been preparing mansions, shall now have a full admission into the kingdom of God. Their happiness shall be completed. The spirits of just men made perfect, united to glorified bodies, shall now be prepared for the highest felicity in heaven.

'The church will be entirely delivered from guilt and sin, and presented to the Father without spot or wrinkle or any such thing. All those given to the Son, will now appear in his train, dressed in white robes—he will say, "here am I and the children thou hast given me." Their troubles are all ended. Perfectly free from sin, they will now be *before the throne of God, and serve him day and night in his temple; and he that sitteth upon the throne shall dwell among them.—They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more, neither shall the sun light on them, nor any heat: for the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of waters, and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes.*

How glorious will be this day to the people of God. It will be the period of their triumph and coronation. They will be publicly owned—and before an assembled universe will receive this invitation, *come ye blessed of my Father inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.* O my brethren, how important that we be looking for, and waiting the appearance of the great God, and our Saviour Jesus Christ. To those *only* that *look for him*, will he appear *unto salvation*. Are your eyes fixed on him? Are you from the heart desiring his appearance? Are you prepared to meet him? *In such an hour as we think not the Son of man cometh.*

Among those who looked for the second coming of Christ, and as we have reason to hope, have been received into his kingdom, may be numbered the Rev. James Wilson, late senior pastor of this church.

The death of a minister of the gospel is an event well calculated to admonish the church and quicken the diligence of those who remain to labor in the field. It is a homage due to departed worth, to attempt to gather up the elements of its formation, and trace the history of its developements, with a view to perpetuate its excellence by its exhibition for the imitation of others; that while the object is hid in the sepulchre, the memory of it may live in the recollection of survivors.

In a brief outline of the character of our late father in the ministry, it cannot be expected that I should be able to give *you* information, among whom was spent nearly the *whole* of his ministerial life. His epistles ye are, the history of his labors is identified with the

growth and prosperity of this town; the impression of his virtues is indelibly stamped upon your minds. The most I can hope to do, is to aid in reviving some of those impressions, with a view to recommend that religion which contributed so materially to form his character and influence his conduct.

The Rev. James Wilson was born in Limerick, the 12th of March, 1760. He was of Scottish and German extract. Though born in Ireland, his paternal grandfather emigrated from Scotland, his maternal ancestors from Germany. His parents were eminently pious. He was trained up in the fear of God, and very early was the subject of religious impressions.

His opportunities for acquiring an education were few, and owing to an inflammation in his eyes at the age of ten or twelve, which lasted two years, he lost even the best of these opportunities. He often regretted his neglect of such advantages as he had.

His entire youth was little else than a continual struggle against the convictions of his conscience; hence he was accustomed to refer often in his preaching to those seasons of awakening. You have heard him illustrate his views of divine grace by a reference to his own christian experience. He was fully convinced of the deep wickedness of his heart, and of the efficacy of Christ's death.

In a manuscript memoir written by himself, which I have been permitted to peruse, he traces very minutely the workings of his own heart—the leadings of Providence, and the operations of grace. Not until he was near twenty-two years of age did he feel himself warranted to hope that he had passed from death

unto life. Soon after, prompted by a love for souls and encouraged by pious friends, he began to exhort men to flee from the wrath to come. He felt that he was called of God to preach the gospel. His early efforts to bring men to Christ were not only acceptable to the pious with whom he associated, but were blessed to the conversion of souls.

Although he had not given himself to a thorough education, yet his zeal, his abilities and gifts, his success induced the founder of the Wesleyans to appoint him a preacher in that connexion. He labored with great assiduity and success for some years, till he was induced to leave that part of the Lord's vineyard and come to America.

During his long and eventful life, he was peculiarly a child of Providence. He was wonderfully preserved from disaster in numerous instances. He lived by faith: he sought direction by prayer in every important step. He lived at a period, and among a people when the indications of Providence were often expected through the medium of dreams and night-visions. By these his attention was directed to this new world. They served to give fixedness to his purposes and inspire confidence in the divine conduct.

By a series of unexpected events the way was prepared for his emigration to America. His mind was gradually prepared to relinquish and renounce the peculiarities of the people with whom he had been associated. He always cherished great respect for the venerable founder of the sect, and affection for his pious friends whom he left in that church. He was

satisfied by searching the Scriptures that the Congregational form of worship was scriptural: and therefore he could sincerely take the oversight of a church of that order.

In May, 1791, he came to this city; which then contained some five thousand inhabitants. There was a Baptist, a Congregational, and an Episcopal Church on the east side of the river; and an Independent one on the west side. These were the only churches in what is now the city of Providence. The aged and venerable pastor of what was sometimes called the "Tennent Church" was in need of an assistant.—Capt. Warner, master of the vessel which brought Mr. Wilson and his family to these shores, gave notice of his arrival. He was at once invited to preach for Mr. Snow. His preaching proving highly acceptable, preliminaries were soon arranged for his labors as an assistant in that church. When he left Ireland, his purpose was to settle in a Southern city, where some valuable members of his father's family resided; but it is not in man that walketh to direct his steps. The place where he landed was destined to be the field of his labors, the scene of his trials, and the grave of himself and family.

He preached nearly two years as an assistant. During the second year he preached part of each Sabbath for six months in St. John's church, then vacant by the death of their pastor. So acceptable were his services that a formal application was made to him to become their permanent spiritual teacher. This he declined. His preaching had been blessed to some influential individuals, who

from attachment to his ministry, were led to join his church.

The attitude of the church in which he first preached was peculiar. They stood alone. The pastor was called a "Separate" or "New Light." He was eminently pious and holy; and had been, in his day, a powerful preacher; but his great age and isolated condition exposed him to the temptation of sectaries of different names who evidently entertained the hope of securing the church in the event of his death. Mr. Wilson was soon apprised of this, and defeated several schemes which he found had been laid to lead off the church. His popular talents and ready eloquence, his devotedness to his work, soon secured the attention and affectionate confidence of the people.

As is known to all, a separation from his venerable colleague took place in 1793, when this church was organized on its present foundation. In October, 1793, Mr. Wilson was ordained as pastor of this church; and from that period to his death he never ceased to care for its best interests. His labors were abundant and were signally blessed. The church and society were enlarged and built up. In 1804 the church was visited with an out-pouring of the Spirit. That revival was marked in its *commencement* by some extraordinary cases of awakening, and in its *progress* reached almost every family in town, and in a special manner visited and blessed the numerous public school under the care of your pastor.—Within a few months near one hundred and fifty were added to this church, while the other churches in town shared largely in the blessing.

In January, 1810, this large and commodious temple was dedicated to the worship of God. The congregation had greatly increased, and needed more ample room. It stands an evidence as well of the power and success of the preacher as of the wealth and numbers of the people. Seasons of refreshing were enjoyed under his ministrations in 1814, also in 1816, and especially in 1820, when the Lord greatly revived his work. These repeated visitations of mercy encouraged the heart of the laborious pastor, and strengthened the stakes as well as extended the cords of Zion. In 1832 considerable additions were made to the church. Our departed friend bore up under the weight of the whole charge of this great people till he reached the age of seventy-five.

If we take into view his limited early education, his foreign birth, and in addition the laborious duty of instructing, for ten years, a numerous public school, and a private one for four years, the church can scarcely furnish a parallel of so long and so successful a ministry. He performed almost incredible labors. He was a tender and faithful watchman of this flock of Christ. He keenly felt the loss when younger men drew off the children of his early friends, but he rejoiced if they found the Saviour elsewhere to be precious to them; most of all did he grieve when any preferred the instruction that causeth to err. All this I have learned from his own lips.

The strength of his hope was tried by a dangerous illness in 1808; but he was strong in the Lord, and was raised up to labor in the vineyard of the gospel. From the time he relinquished active duty, he stood like Aaron who died on the top of the mount, waiting for the call of

his Master. His prayers for your welfare were unceasing, till his life and usefulness ended together on the 14th of the present month. What was said of the father of the Jewish priesthood, may with propriety be repeated here. "And when all the congregation saw that Aaron was dead they mourned for Aaron—even all the house of Israel." Like Aaron, your venerated pastor died instantly, without previous sickness. The astounding intelligence spread through the city, filling every house with sorrow. There was scarcely a family that did not feel they had lost a friend; there was scarcely a family some of whose members he had not either married, or baptized or buried. All felt they were interested in that venerable man, who had stood here nearly half a century without a month's absence at any one time.

———"His end was full of peace,
"Fitting his uniform piety serene."

It was rather a translation than a death. The "narrow sea" was passed by a single step, while others pass it in a storm, or lie becalmed on its surface. I exceedingly regret I was absent from the city when devout men carried his remains to the grave. Seldom has such a public demonstration of respect been paid to departed excellence; rarely, if ever, in this city have so many gathered around the bier where reposed the remains of goodness, as at the interment of our late friend. It has been justly said, "the public grief but seldom errs; and hence the expression of it consecrates the dead, and is itself a prouder monument than any that sculpture can bestow." Such a monument it is our melancholy office now to erect.

As a man Mr. Wilson possessed great physical strength,

and corresponding intellectual powers. He had a mind of great originality and compass. He was peculiarly happy in the use of his various stores of knowledge. His memory was surprisingly tenacious and ready. His genius was of a high order. A diligent student he turned all his materials of thought to good account. Had he possessed more learning, his sermons had shone with more polish and had been more accurate, but they would have had less of nature and probably been less effective. Not that learning weakens the efforts of genius, but, often by creating in the mind of the possessor a high standard and producing fastidiousness, it causes dissatisfaction with the efforts made, and this paralyzes the powers.—The preacher who waits to ponder and polish every word and sentence will accomplish but little, while one who catches his inspiration from the cross, and relying upon the grace of God, after diligent study, publishes the gospel, will turn many to righteousness.

In his social relations our venerated friend shone with peculiar lustre. As a *father* he was all that children could desire. He aimed to bring them to Christ that he might bless them. His kind heart overflowed with affection to every member of his family. As a *friend* and companion he was affectionate, frank, and upright. He was a man of strong points of character; he was ardent in his attachments and decided in his views. Though of quick temperament he harbored no resentments.

He was a friend to education. No man has ever lived in this city who has taken a greater interest in the training of youth, and who will be more tenderly remembered by his pupils. He taught many hundreds, and was their true friend. He aimed as much to enlighten the conscience and benefit the heart as to improve the mind.

As a *preacher* he had few superiors in the vigor of manhood. He had read extensively, and his ready mind brought to the illustration of gospel truth, facts and incidents gathered from the kingdoms of nature and providence, as well as from the page of history, so that at times he would delight and instruct an audience with uncommon power and interest. He never wrote his sermons, and therefore in his best days he gave to them a freshness and unction which more formal discourses, previously written, could not possess. When in late years his memory failed, he felt the loss of that early training and correct discipline, as well as store of truth, which the habit of writing his sermons would have given him. He loved the cross, and like the apostle to the Gentiles he determined to know nothing save Jesus Christ and him crucified. His ministry for the first three quarters of his life was remarkably successful. God gave him many souls as the seals of his faithfulness. Many of his spiritual children translated before him have received him to everlasting habitations. Many wait to follow him when the Master calls.

As a *pastor* he was faithful and indefatigable. He had a kind heart, and never failed to sympathize with the afflicted and console the mourner. The lone child of want or of woe found in him a father and friend. He sought not ease, nor shrunk from duty. He aimed to feed the flock of Christ with knowledge.

But his work is done—his warfare is accomplished, and we doubt not, he has reached his rest and received a crown of righteousness. His faith retained its hold upon the covenant amid the decays of nature; and when he ceased to look through a glass darkly, he opened his eyes

upon the visions of the lamb. It may be said of him, "he lived to see two world's die." He had preached the gospel more than fifty years, and added multitudes to the church, many of whom, we trust will be saved.

Such a death ought to arouse the whole church, and crowd vast thoughts through the mind. Such a ministry must bring with it fearful responsibility. But few of the generation to which our departed friend belonged, now remain. They will soon have passed away. O that they may be as well prepared to go.

On this occasion we express our deepest sympathy for the members of the bereaved family. This death removes your last earthly parent. While you may often go out to the grave to weep there, you mourn not as those without hope. Your sainted parents rest from their trials; what can you do less than prepare to meet them? There remains to you the remembrance of a mother's of piety, a father's virtues; but above all the consolations of Christ. When you have dried your tears, will you not recall the precepts, treasure up the counsels, and walk in the footsteps of your excellent father, that though dead, he may yet speak to the world through your reflection of his goodness?

This solemn event is calculated deeply to impress the members of this church. He who received the most of you to the privileges of Christ's house, is gone. If you wander, he will no longer call after you to return. If you forsake the house of God, he will not be here to observe your vacant seat, but you must meet him at the bar of God. He has gone from us, what report has he carried to heaven of our state?—How must his death reprove any who are in a back-

slidden condition, who cherish any wrong feelings towards those in communion with them. After having witnessed the full glories of heaven, were he permitted how would he speak to us this day, on the importance of living together as the heirs of the grace of life.

O brethren, is it not time to awake out of sleep?—By the tears and labors, by the trials and death of your departed minister, I entreat you to rise up to the work of the Lord. Our time is short, the Saviour calls. Let us go into his vineyard and work.

Standing here alone, in charge with these souls, I feel the need of your prayers—I cast myself upon your forbearance. I tremble to think of my responsibility. Who is sufficient for these things? The veneration and love you cherished for your aged pastor, the abundant provision you made for his wants when he was no longer able to serve you, is an encouragement to his successor. I would catch his falling mantle and share in the affections of his people.

What shall I say to the congregation, so many of whom yet remain out of the ark? After all his tears and prayers and labors he has left you in the gall of bitterness and the bonds of iniquity. “Content with loving the man, and weeping perhaps under his affectionate sermons, you have never repented of your sins, nor bowed to the sceptre of Christ.” That man of God will speak to you no more. His prayers are ended. O call to mind his pungent appeals, and melting entreaties. Embrace the Saviour he so often preached to you; and though he will not be present in this house to witness your solemn vows and public

engagements, he will look from heaven to see the act that attaches you to a cause for which he spent his latest breath. Is not this the time for you to repent? A long ministry among you is now closed forever.— You have followed to the grave with your tears, one who has often wept over you. You will see his face no more. Your love for the man will not screen you from the frown of the Judge, if you neglect his message.

When these solemn badges now hung around this desk to speak a church's loss, are removed, will you turn again to the world and live as though you were not to meet your former pastor in the judgment? Your future lives must answer.



A P P E N D I X .

NOTE A.—page 3.

ON the day of Mr. Wilson's death, he arose in his usual health.— Being Saturday and having been prevented from attending the house of God on the preceding Lord's day, he anticipated the approaching Sabbath, with unusual interest. Early in the afternoon he walked out to the barbers. On his return he called to see his early and very dear friend Deacon Stephen Wardwell, who was ill. Little did he think he was entering that friendly mansion, where for more than forty-seven years he had been so kindly received, for the last time. His aged friend was unable to see him. He there complained of a pain in his chest. He slowly returned home, and as he entered his own house, complained of being cold, he spoke of a strange sensation in his chest. He was able to reach his room, where for so many years he had held communion with God and meditated on his truth. His affectionate daughter, who for some years had devoted herself to her aged and only parent, kindled a fire and prepared for him some warm drink. While in the act of making these preparations for his comfort, she looked towards him still sitting in his chair, when she perceived his head fall upon one side and a spasm appeared in his face. She sprang to him, but he was insensible. In a few moments his spirit fled. He had been heard in former times to express a wish to go suddenly. The melancholy tidings broke upon the community thus unexpectedly.

NOTE B.—page 19.

His paternal grandfather, James Wilson, was born in Scotland about the year 1691. His maternal grandfather, Philip Guier, was a native of Germany, born A. D. 1705. When only about five years of age, he arrived with his parents and about eighty other German families as emigrants to Ireland, in order to escape the ravages and desolation of a thirty years war, which betwixt the invading armies of Louis XIV of France, and the repelling ones of the Protestants under William, Prince of Orange, and the invincible Duke of Marlborough, afflicted the German States beyond measure. Besides the eighty families before mentioned, who took refuge under Queen Anne, many others retired to, and settled in North Carolina. Those who took refuge in Ireland, landed in Dublin, being discouraged by adverse winds, and a long, rough, dangerous passage. They determined to abide in the Emerald Isle.

Manuscript Memoir.

NOTE C.—page 19.

November 27th, 1785.

I this day by the advice of a worthy friend for the first time begin to note down the manner of the Lord's dealings with my soul, merely for my own private use, earnestly desiring that it may, through the Lord's blessing, prove helpful to my growth in grace; for that purpose I shall attempt briefly to recount his former mercies. I begin then with my childhood. When about six years old, the Lord first drew my heart to things eternal. I then began to know myself a sinner, and earnestly longed for a sense of God's forgiving mercy; but those serious impressions were seldom lasting, though frequent; but from ten to sixteen years of age, I felt more of my sinfulness and helplessness, though too often carried away by the temptuosity of youthful desires, and evil companions. I observed during this period my convictions were less frequent, but gradually more lasting than before, but through my own ignorance, stubbornness and folly, only rendered my life al-

most miserable, for conscience stung me, the fear of death and judgment scared me, and the spirit of God so wounded me that almost every enjoyment was embittered. The two succeeding years I rather grew more hardened in sin until about the 21st of May, 1778, conviction laid firm hold of me through the power of God's Holy Spirit; from that time till the beginning of July, I ate my bread as though it were ashes; I mingled my drink with my weeping, and watered my couch with my tears; restless nights and wearisome days were appointed unto me, so that for about six weeks I was nearly in agony, bordering on despair; the means of grace which I used diligently were but broken cisterns, except at times they proved as a dagger to my soul, by representing the terrors of the law; during this time, I scarce had a gleam of comfort, for having tried all means, and these failing, and not knowing Jesus Christ to be the way, I concluded all was lost. I murmured that I ever was born, thought God dealt harder with me than others.— Sometimes would I wish I had not been born of religious parents; at other times felt enmity and malice to the preachers for disturbing mens' consciences, and thought they deserved stoning; then considering they went not of their own will, but the Lord's, I impiously and blasphemously wished there had been no God; and though I spurned the Lord, he in mercy pitied me, and on a Sabbath evening under Mr. Brabburn's sermon, revealed Christ to me, though not in me; however, hope then dawned and grew stronger till Tuesday, when with a trembling hand I was enabled to lay hold on the Lamb of God, which I in a feeble manner retained for about three weeks, but then through the temptation, ignorance and sloth, I cast my shield from me, and by degrees grew cold and hard—but I then not only returned as a dog to his vomit, but I became seven fold more a child of hell than before; the very remembrance of which, has since nearly made my soul shudder, and the blood chill in my veins;—for considering what I had fallen from, I then despaired of being ever able to save my soul, and being pursued by conscience, and the Spirit of the Lord, my life was completely miserable; in nothing could I find rest; however I determined to use one effort more. * * *

January 9th, 1780.

Going to hear Mr. Payne preach, that servant of God, now in Abraham's bosom, though I went with a bad design, the Lord arrested me, set home the word and so powerfully convinced me of the future state, that I was constrained lest it should be the last offer of mercy, to seek

the Lord; and e'er I arose from my seat, had Jesus revealed in my heart. Within a fortnight after, these words, "Thou shalt bear my name before many or much people," together with the conviction I should one day preach the everlasting gospel, were powerfully impressed upon my mind, and continued most lasting while I was most in earnest; and I observed when I resisted the conviction, which I generally did, it brought barrenness to my soul. My motives for resisting it, were, First, a fear lest it was from the enemy of souls. Second, I in some measure knew my own inability, and therefore cried, how can these things be? Third, I wished to live a private life, and feared the trials consequent on being an ambassador of Christ, together with a natural timidity; these were my motives for oft crying, Lord send by whom thou wilt send, but send not by me; and though I generally was in doubt, yet at some times I felt persuaded if I went not, souls would be required at my hand. I thus continued halting between two opinions, until the beginning of January, 1782, when wearied with temptation and uncertainty, I firmly resolved by the Lord's help, to fast every Friday, and pray mightily, until the Lord would fully assure me of his will; and on the first Friday I retired to my closet, confidently believing that the Lord would then graciously condescend to make known his will concerning me. With this persuasion, after earnest prayer I opened the New Testament. The first words I fixed my eyes on, were the 14 and 15th verses of the 22d of the Acts, and with such forcible influence, reached my heart that I no longer doubted the Lord's will, but with fear and shame submitted to the Lord from that time, till May, 1783. I sought the Lord and kept, and pondered these things in my heart—not but I oft wished to decline the cup mixed for me, until at length wearied with resisting, I resolved by the advice of a friend, to make trial, which I accordingly did Sunday May 3d, 1783, in a country place, eight miles from the city of Limerick, but the burden was more than I could well bear, however after attempting to give a word of exhortation, my soul was lightened of a mighty load, and for a few hours enjoyed more solid happiness, than I ever remembered to have enjoyed before, or since, for the time. In the evening, took a text, Malachi iv: 2; but had little liberty, which discouraged, but humbled me. The next Sunday I spoke with much liberty, twice, from John i: 29, and Isaiah xlv: 6, and from that time found an increase of wisdom, and had frequent opportunity of exercising my feeble talents, in calling on sinners to repent, and stirring up professors to

run with patience the race set before them. The 25th of August following, my apprenticeship expired, and about the latter end of September, at Mr. Wesley's desire, I began travelling on the Limerick circuit.

Manuscript Memoir.

NOTE D.—page 20.

The immediate occasion of Mr. Wilson's coming to America was his failure in business—the loss of his property. After he retired from the circuit as a preacher, he continued to supply different vacancies, as he was solicited. In connection with some of the family of his wife he commenced the manufacturing business, but was unsuccessful. He then turned his thoughts to America, looking upon his embarrassments as an indication of Providence, that his divine Master had other work for him in the new world.

The vessel in which he sailed was near being wrecked, soon after they set sail, the winds proving adverse, he made an attempt to return to shore, ready to abandon the enterprise. So near was he giving up his long expected voyage. It is not in man that walketh to direct his steps.

